

“Worship is Walking with God”

2 Kings 10:18-31

God’s judgment is coming, so walk with Him to reveal the salvation Christ offers.

Deceit Practiced in War

Sin is Infectious

Wholehearted Healing

Deceit Practiced in War

2 Kings 10:18-19, NKJV

Then Jehu gathered all the people together, and said to them, “Ahab served Baal a little, Jehu will serve him much. Now therefore, call to me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests. Let no one be missing, for I have a great sacrifice for Baal. Whoever is missing shall not live.” But Jehu acted deceptively, with the intent of destroying the worshipers of Baal.

The Bible is unique among sacred writings in this world. God’s Word acknowledges the flaws and failures of those who serve Him. In the false religions of the world, their sacred writings, and their heroes and prophets are flawless; they do no wrong and are righteous. In the inspired Word of God the only perfect one is God; Jesus, who is God in flesh. King David, Solomon, Abraham, Sarah, the disciples, and King Jehu all accomplish the thing God called them to do, but often used means that were not always sanctioned by God.

Jehu was anointed king by messengers from the Prophet Elisha (2 Kings 9:1-5). God called Jehu to, “...*strike down the house of Ahab your master, that I may avenge the blood of My servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord, at the hand of Jezebel. For the whole house of Ahab shall perish; and I will cut off from Ahab all the males in Israel, both bond and free*” (2 Kings 9:7-8, NKJV).

These kinds of passages call Scripture and God into question. Many will say Christians do not have a right to condemn those who follow false gods in this world for their violence because God and His people are no different. There is a difference between Almighty God taking vengeance and mankind taking vengeance into their hands.

It is the Lord’s place to take vengeance since it is He who all sin is against. The Lord says, “*Vengeance is Mine, and recompense; Their foot shall slip in due time; For the day of their calamity is at hand, And the things to come hasten upon them* (Deuteronomy 32:35, NKJV). The writer of Psalm 94 cried out to God saying, “*O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongs—O God, to whom vengeance belongs, shine forth! Rise up, O Judge of the earth; Render punishment to the proud. Lord, how long will the wicked, How long will the wicked triumph?*” (Psalm 94:1-3, NKJV). King David acknowledged in his confession of sin before God, “*Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight—That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge*” (Psalm 51:4, NKJV).

There are things that people do against others, but every sin committed is ultimately done in opposition to God and His authority over them. The Lord has created everything in harmony with His character and His perfect will. Therefore, all things that

are done in this life contrary to the established order of the Creator is identified as sin and punishable by death. Therefore, God has the right to judge everyone since He alone is the One who has been wronged. Ahab was to receive God's judgment upon him through the hand of Jehu. King Jehu took it upon himself to go above and beyond the call of God and destroy the prophets of Baal after striking down Ahab's family.

The deceitful way Jehu lured the prophets of Baal to gather was certainly lying to them about his intentions. It is clear in Scripture that God is not like sinful people; He does not lie or deceive, "*God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?*" (Numbers 23:19, NKJV). God commanded the people they were not to lie or give false testimony (Exodus 20:16; Deuteronomy 5:20). Lying is a sin because God does not lie; it is against His character to lie because He is Truth.

This means lies are not sanctioned by God, but it is something that well intentioned people will do to achieve the results they want or know that God wants by any means necessary rather than trusting God in His timing and method to accomplish His will. Jehu was at war with those associated with worshiping Baal. The prophets, servants, and priests of Baal were seen as a menace to the worship of the One True God. Jehu was going the extra mile, as they say, to do what He thought the will of God was. Jehu was believed because those who were worshiping and serving the false god of Baal wanted what they heard to be true and they rushed to do what they were told.

The problem with Jehu's strategy was killing everyone who did not believe as he did could never and will never stop or prevent people from worshiping things other than God. That is because the heart is sinful. Therefore, it is only a matter of time till there are others who rise up and worship things other than God in rebellion against the Lord. This bloodshed could have been avoided if Jehu was worshiping God by walking with Him.

A person, congregation, or nation who walks with God seeks His guidance and listens to the Holy Spirit's counsel before doing things no matter how noble an idea is they would like to do. Jehu was not following the Lord's direction, nor did he desire to know what God wanted him to do next. Jehu was out to proclaim his zeal for the Lord which is clear when he invited Jehobadab to, "*Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord*" (2 Kings 10:16, NKJV). The Lord is certainly angry with those who prostitute themselves spiritually by worshiping things other than Him because it only destroys their lives. God had commanded Jehu to go on some killing spree against all the enemies of God.

The plan and lie Jehu told to the prophets, servants, and priests of Baal was displaying Jehu's arrogance and self-righteousness. The Lord will take care of His enemies in His time and His way. A lack of faith is displayed whenever God's people attempt to bring about the will of God in their timing and by their methods.

Worshiping God by walking with Him is to faithfully do what He commands, when He commands it, and in the way He commands it to be done. There is nothing a child of God can do that will impress God or cause Him to love them any more than He does at any given moment. Walking with God is to be in step with His Spirit worshiping in spirit and in truth. The Apostle Paul explained it this way to the believers in Galatia, "*...Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish*" (Galatians 5:16-17, NKJV).

The things that a person desires to do for God is rarely what God has called them to do or is even calling them to do. The lust of the flesh can sometimes appear to be quite noble. Jehu's lust was a blood lust which God has never called His people to have. The lust of the flesh brings glory to people and lifts up sin as a noble or worthy thing, but it is a lie to justify satisfying the evil desires of a person's heart. This is why the Apostle Paul was inspired to encourage the followers of Christ to walk in the Spirit bringing about God's will for them and for the world in which we live.

Sin is hideous and certainly infects everything that touches it. God is the One who overcomes sin; it is not for His people to overcome sin on His behalf. God calls all His people to obedience and holiness. God calls people merely to warn others of His vengeance and wrath and proclaim salvation by His grace through faith in Christ Jesus alone.

Sin is Infectious

2 Kings 10:20-28, NKJV

And Jehu said, "Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal." So they proclaimed it. Then Jehu sent throughout all Israel; and all the worshipers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left who did not come. So they came into the temple of Baal, and the temple of Baal was full from one end to the other. And he said to the one in charge of the wardrobe, "Bring out vestments for all the worshipers of Baal." So he brought out vestments for them. Then Jehu and Jehonadab the son of Rechab went into the temple of Baal, and said to the worshipers of Baal, "Search and see that no servants of the Lord are here with you, but only the worshipers of Baal." So they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings. Now Jehu had appointed for himself eighty men on the outside, and had said, "If any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escapes, whoever lets him escape, it shall be his life for the life of the other."

Now it happened, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the captains, "Go in and kill them; let no one come out!" And they killed them with the edge of the sword; then the guards and the officers threw them out, and went into the inner room of the temple of Baal. And they brought the sacred pillars out of the temple of Baal and burned them. Then they broke down the sacred pillar of Baal, and tore down the temple of Baal and made it a refuse dump to this day. Thus Jehu destroyed Baal from Israel.

Jehu did destroy Baal worship in Israel. There is no denying that his plan was clever and efficient. Jehu enticed all those of Baal to enthusiastically gather together, had them make certain no one was present who worshiped the Lord, and then, made sure no one could escape the gathering while he and his men killed them all. It was the perfect strategy, but God did not call him to do any of it. God often takes the blame for the cruelty of His people when things like this happen. It is a dangerous thing for any of God's people to allow their sinful hearts to taint the just vengeance of God.

The crusades of the mid-evil time period needed to happen to push back the Islamic soldiers from taking over all of Europe and imposing Shira Law over all they conquered. The atrocities against the Jewish people that went along with the crusades were things

God never commanded, but those who were zealous for the Lord took it upon themselves to go above and beyond the instruction of God.

There have been times in God's Word where complete destruction of a people is called for and sanctioned by the Lord. The people of the land of Canaan, which the Lord was giving Israel as their inheritance, were to be completely decimated but not every people who were not part of them,

¹⁰ "When you go near a city to fight against it, then proclaim an offer of peace to it. ¹¹ And it shall be that if they accept your offer of peace, and open to you, then all the people who are found in it shall be placed under tribute to you, and serve you. ¹² Now if the city will not make peace with you, but war against you, then you shall besiege it. ¹³ And when the Lord your God delivers it into your hands, you shall strike every male in it with the edge of the sword. ¹⁴ But the women, the little ones, the livestock, and all that is in the city, all its spoil, you shall plunder for yourself; and you shall eat the enemies' plunder which the Lord your God gives you. ¹⁵ Thus you shall do to all the cities which are very far from you, which are not of the cities of these nations.

¹⁶ "But of the cities of these peoples which the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance, you shall let nothing that breathes remain alive, ¹⁷ but you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as the Lord your God has commanded you, ¹⁸ lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods, and you sin against the Lord your God. (Deuteronomy 20:10-18, NKJV)

God never sanctioned genocide as many accuse Him of doing. It was the people of these cities where the abominations were practiced and accepted as normal were to be utterly destroyed. Case in point is the cities of the Hittites who were set for complete annihilation. The city dwellers, where the practices of child sacrifice, sexual immorality, and pagan worship had infiltrated every aspect of the people's lives living there, was who was destroyed, not everyone who was of Hittite descendant.

If genocide was what God demanded of Israel to do then Bathsheba would not have had a husband, "*So David sent and inquired about the woman. And someone said, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"* (2 Samuel 11:3, NKJV). Ruth would have never been part of the lineage of Christ having been a Moabitess, "*Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy it from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance"* (Ruth 4:5, NKJV). Rahab would also have been removed from the privilege of being part of God's plan to bring the Messiah into the world, "*Now the city shall be doomed by the Lord to destruction, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent"* (Joshua 6:17).

The people of these cities were doing things that were revolting and disgusting to the Creator. The Lord was merciful to those who would repent of their sins against Him. Living in harmony with God under His authority is where all people and animals will find peace, joy, purpose, and fulfillment. Sin thrusts people out of fellowship with God

and destroys people by convincing them that what they are enjoying is better than the things that God offers to them.

God is also very patient with those who are in rebellion against Him and out of fellowship with Him. Abram was told by God that the land would be his descendant's land once the sins of the people in Canaan had come to its fullness, "*But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete*" (Genesis 15:16, NKJV). The Lord had held off His judgment from that time. He spoke with Abram about the invasion of the land of Canaan by the Israelites. Those of Nineveh also would find mercy from God when they repented of their sins and atrocities against Him and His creation, "*Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it*" (Jonah 3:10, NKJV).

God is merciful and kind even in His dealing with people who are haters of Him. The Lord cannot allow sin to go unpunished though. Sin is spiritually what influenza and meningitis is physically. These highly contagious diseases make a person physically ill and have the potential to cause a person to die if left untreated. Sin is worse because it does lead to spiritual death unless one receives forgiveness through the propitiation (satisfying of God's judgment against sin) of their sins through faith in Christ's sacrifice on behalf of themselves.

The person who believes they can be around sin and remain unaffected by it is lying to themselves and is oblivious to the deadliness of sin. This is why God throughout the Scriptures warns about the dangers of sin. This is why He called for the annihilation of all those cities in the land of Canaan that He was going to destroy using Israel. The infectious nature of sin is seen in the history of God's people due to their unwillingness to drive the people out of the land completely as they were commanded to do.

¹ Then the Angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: "I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, 'I will never break My covenant with you. ² And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.' But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this? ³ Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.'"⁴ So it was, when the Angel of the Lord spoke these words to all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voices and wept. (Judges 2:1-4, NKJV)

Sin that is left unchallenged will always cause problems in the life of God's people. The only way to walk with the Lord in worship is to allow Him, by the indwelling of His Spirit, to confront all sin that is part of your life, confess and repent of that sin, and replace it with things of God rather than the things of mankind. In this way the whole heart is transformed and life is permanently changed to look more like the Christ.

Wholehearted Healing

2 Kings 10:29-31, NKJV

However Jehu did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin, that is, from the golden calves that were at Bethel and

Dan. And the Lord said to Jehu, "Because you have done well in doing what is right in My sight, and have done to the house of Ahab all that was in My heart, your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation." But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart; for he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam, who had made Israel sin.

The Lord praised Jehu for doing what He commanded him to do, and not what he thought was right in his eyes to do for the Lord. The killing of those connected with Baal worship did not impress God at all. The expression of zeal for God would have been turning away from the sins of Jeroboam refusing to worship the golden calf idols at Bethel and Dan.

Jehu would have been better to do what the Lord commanded him to do and forsake all other gods and idols. This happens in the lives of those who allow God to change their hearts. Jehu was anointed as king by God but did not choose to walk with God in obedience to His commandments and statutes. He was not a man after God's heart as David (1 Samuel 13:13-14).

God desires to heal the human heart of its wickedness. The difficulty is that people grow so accustomed to sin that they come to believe that being healthy spiritually is to become spiritually sick. People who are walking with God who choose to refrain from doing certain activities or behaving in ways that are accepted by others are viewed as acting self-righteous. They are not self-righteous, but are simply convicting others by living in the righteousness of Christ as they walk with Him on a daily basis doing what He does and talking like He does. This brings conviction to those who are not in Christ because of the contrast of the child of God's lifestyle.

Wholehearted healing takes place in small increments over the lifetime of the person who commits their life to Christ; it is not a quick change at all. Slow, incremental change over long periods of time allows for the whole person to make permanent sustainable changes throughout their life. This is precisely what it means to be a disciple of Christ and to make disciples of Christ or to mature as Christ's disciple.

The twelve disciples of Christ spent three to three and a half intensive years with Christ twenty-four hours a day in constant communion with Him. Eleven of the twelve changed dramatically while one remained the same as he was when he met the Lord Jesus. Judas Iscariot did everything the other disciples did and was part of the ministry as the others were, but he never allowed his heart to be truly healed by Christ as the others had done. He was still influenced by the sinful nature of his heart more than by the truth of who Christ was and the will of the Father over his life.

Change must come into the life of the believer. Changing attitude, thoughts, behavior, and speech are all things that give evidence to the indwelling presence of God. No one will ever be perfect, but everyone who claims Christ as Lord over their life must be moving in that direction. The people of God must exchange the desires of the sinful heart and make the desires of God's heart their own.

It is important that walking with God in obedience to His calling and commands are what we are doing rather than doing what we want and assuming God is walking with us.